
Meeting: Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 06 March 2012

Subject: Local Transport Plan Scheme Prioritisation Framework

Report of: Cllr Ken Matthews, Executive Member for Sustainable Communities

Summary: The report proposes the adoption of a scheme prioritisation framework to determine the funding priorities for the authority through the Local Transport Plan.

Advising Officer: Gary Alderson, Director of Sustainable Communities

Contact Officer: Ben King, Principal Transport Planner

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

1. The Local Transport Plan (referred to as the LTP) is an important tool in helping to deliver the priorities contained within the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Transport is a means to an end and the LTP will help assist in providing the capacity for economic growth, cater for an increase in demand to travel, help improve the health and well being of the population, increase access to education and other local services, and address general quality of life issues.

Financial:

2. The authority receives an annual capital settlement from Central Government through the LTP, split between funding to be spent on integrated transport measures and maintenance of the network.

In addition, the LTP forms a framework through which to secure additional investment in transport through developer contributions, bidding for other pots of funding and a basis upon which to lobby for investment from transport operators.

The prioritisation framework will help to determine the allocation of this funding.

Legal:

3. No direct implications.

Risk Management:

4. The following risks have been identified:

- Failure to discharge statutory requirements.
- Reputational damage through not addressing community /local needs.

These risks will be monitored and mitigating action taken.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

5. No direct implications.

Equalities/Human Rights:

6. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was carried out in conjunction with the production of the Local Transport Plan, and both the LATPs and the Scheme Prioritisation Framework sit within the LTP suite of documents.

The EIA concluded that the LTP's focus on providing realistic travel options and alternatives to car based travel to increase accessibility especially to employment and training opportunities, education, healthcare provision and leisure facilities, would have positive impacts across all groups, particularly disabled people and those in deprived areas without access to a car.

In addition the LTP also addresses the worst impacts of traffic, namely pedestrian accidents, air and noise pollution and busy roads cutting through communities which disproportionately affect deprived areas and people facing social exclusion.

As part of the development of each LATP, detailed consideration is given to these issues at a local level and further public consultation will be undertaken to ensure that all relevant issues are identified. In addition, the Scheme Prioritisation Framework reflects these requirements and helps to ensure that priority is given to proposals which will have the most beneficial impact.

Public Health:

7. Not applicable.

Community Safety:

8. The scoring criteria within the Scheme Prioritisation Framework includes reference to reducing the number of people killed and seriously injured, giving greater weighting to schemes which will assist in this regard. However, dedicated road safety schemes will not be prioritised through this framework as they are funded and prioritised through a separate process.

Sustainability:

9. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was produced for the LTP, whilst a number of the schemes included within the LTP programme will promote less reliance on use of the car and increase use of sustainable transport modes, which in turn reduce congestion, air pollution, and CO2 emissions.

Procurement:

10. Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:-

1. **Recommend to the Executive that the Scheme Prioritisation Framework be approved as a tool for determining the shape of the Local Transport Plan programme.**

Local Transport Plan

11. The Central Bedfordshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) was adopted by the authority on 1 April 2011. It covers the 15 year period up until March 2026 and contains a series of objectives and related targets and indicators against which to determine the success of the authority in improving transport infrastructure and service provision.
12. The LTP details strategic areas of intervention which form a framework for investment, to not just achieve the objectives of the Plan but also ensure that transport contributes towards the wider priorities of the authority.
13. The authority is awarded an annual settlement from the Government through which to deliver the Local Transport Plan. This is split between Integrated Transport Block funding and funding for maintenance schemes, as detailed in the table below:

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Integrated Transport	£1.26m	£1.34m	£1.34m
Maintenance	£3.86m	£3.92m	£4.00m

Local Area Transport Plans

14. A series of Local Area Transport Plans (LATPs) sit underneath the LTP. These apply the principles established within the LTP at the local level taking into account local issues and travel patterns. The LATPs and the timetable for them to be produced are included in the table below:

2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Arlesey & Stotfold,	Amphill and Flitwick,	Chiltern,
Biggleswade & Sandy,	Marston Vale,	Potton, and
Dunstable & Houghton Regis, and	Shefford, Silsoe & Shillington, and	Haynes & Old Warden.
Leighton Linlade.	Toddington, Harlington and Barton-le-Clay.	

15. Funding available to the authority through the Integrated Transport Block has been allocated between these areas in the LTP, with an emphasis on the main growth areas of the authority which form first tranche of LATPs to be delivered.
16. Extensive consultation has been undertaken on the LATPs (to supplement that undertaken on the development of the Local Transport Plan itself) with local residents, stakeholders, town and parish councils, as well as Central Bedfordshire Council Members all targeted. Details of this process are included in Appendix A.

Need for Prioritisation

17. The production of each Local Area Transport Plan has highlighted a number of issues which need to be addressed in each locality and a number of schemes through which the authority may do so. However due to the financial constraints on the authority it is not possible to deliver all of these schemes through the LTP budget. As a consequence of this it is necessary to prioritise certain schemes for delivery.
18. Therefore in order to prioritise schemes in the fairest and most transparent manner, a Scheme Prioritisation Framework has been developed against which every scheme put forward by officers, members or the general public will be assessed. It will form a sound evidence base upon which to make informed decisions on future investment. A copy of the Framework is provided in Appendix B.
19. Each scheme put forward will be incorporated into a "long list" of schemes for each LATP area. Scores will then be awarded against a set of criteria within the Framework to determine the relative ranking of the schemes.
20. Those which appear at the top of the rankings would be funded through the LTP itself, whilst those further down the list would be funded by other sources of funding as and when it becomes available from S106 contributions, a Community Infrastructure Levy or any other pots the authority may utilise.
21. A number of schemes will be exempt from the Prioritisation Framework. The schemes must be capital schemes relating to the provision of actual infrastructure, as opposed to revenue schemes which involve ongoing costs and relate to maintenance and the operation of services for example. Specific road safety improvements are also omitted as these are funded separately.

The Scoring Framework

22. The scoring framework is based upon best practice and Government Guidance on scheme prioritisation, with scores awarded in the three main areas of policy compliance, deliverability and value for money.
23.
 - **Policy compliance:** Focuses on each schemes' ability to help deliver the objectives of the Local Transport Plan, and if they are referred to in other adopted Plans such the Town and Parish Council Plans or Town Centre Masterplans for example.

The inclusion of these scoring criteria ensure that those schemes which best adhere to the direction of the authority in transport terms are prioritised, whilst there is integration between Plan making at difference levels of governance.
24.
 - **Deliverability:** Incorporates the areas of affordability, risk and support for particular schemes to reflect the ability of the authority to implement the scheme both financial and in engineering terms, in the context of the public and political desire for specific interventions.

The criteria enable the authority to rule out those measures which are unfeasible to deliver whilst showing a direct correlation between feedback on consultation and the prioritisation of schemes.
25.
 - **Value for Money:** Contains criteria concerning the integration of schemes, the coverage of schemes and the revenue implications of providing each scheme.

Such criteria reward those initiatives which will maximise the benefits of their implementation through integration with other initiatives, encouraging travel by various different modes of travel and which do not place a cost burden on the authority in terms of future maintenance requirements.

Conclusion and Next Steps

26. The authority will not be bound by the results generated from the application of Framework. Instead they are intended to be used as a guide to inform decision making and improve the authority's transparency and accountability of investment in local transport schemes.
27. In cases it is suggested that the authority should deviate away from the results of the Framework however, sound justification would be required to ensure that each scheme is judged on an equitable basis.
28. Following the endorsement of the Scheme Prioritisation Framework, it will be applied to the development of the programme for the second tranche of Local Area Transport Plans and on subsequent LATPs.
29. The "Long List" of schemes will be refreshed on an annual basis to enable new schemes to be considered and a ready made list of prioritises to be available to the authority as and when additional funding becomes available.

30. The LATPs will be assessed by the Executive in March for approval and the comments of the Committee on the Scheme Prioritisation Framework made available to Executive Members for consideration.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Local Area Transport Plans Consultation Process

Appendix B – Scheme Prioritisation Framework

Background papers:

Local Transport Plan